



## LOUISIANA SENATE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **STATE SENATE BEGINS WORK OF 2015 REGULAR SESSION**

#### **STATE BUDGET ISSUES AND RELATED TAX INCENTIVE ISSUES TOP THE AGENDA**

Members of the Louisiana State Senate began the work of the 2015 Regular Session of the State Legislature at noon Monday, April 13, 2015. As the state constitution requires, the odd-numbered year session is centered on the consideration of certain revenue, tax and budget issues with limited discussion of other "general" legislation. The focus on the budget and related revenue issues is especially appropriate this year as the state faces a \$1.6 billion budget shortfall with significant budget cuts a possibility for both health care services and higher education. Governor Jindal has proposed changes in certain refundable tax credits to help offset some of the cuts and legislators have filed a long list of bills that offer alternatives to close the budget gap.

"Obviously our major focus this session will be finding a solution to the budget challenges," Senate President John A. Alario, Jr. (R-Westwego) said. "We will continue our discussions, which began several months ago, looking at our options. Our goal is to not only address this year's budget issues, but also provide a more stable long-term foundation for state spending and revenue issues in the years to come."



Senate President Alario brings the 2015 Regular Legislative Session to order.

**It is a sentiment shared by Senate President Pro-Tempore Sharon Weston Broome (D-Baton Rouge). “Considering the budget issues we face, I am hopeful that the challenges will serve as a catalyst to encourage us all to work across party lines and beyond ideologies to find a solution to the daunting budget issues we face.”**

**The Senate Finance Committee will get right to work on the budget issues on the second day of the session. The committee will begin its review of the governor’s proposed executive budget. The agency-by-agency review will continue for several weeks.**

**Beyond the budget and tax issues, lawmakers are also expected to revisit proposals to either fine tune or eliminate the state’s participation in more rigorous curriculum standards for public schools known as Common Core. Tweaking state laws on how teachers and students are evaluated is also on the table.**

**Legislators have also filed a package of bills aimed at addressing sexual assault crimes. One set of bills deals specifically with the problem of sexual assault on the state’s college campuses. Another group of bills focuses on how law enforcement handles sexual assault crimes and victims.**



**In advance of the start of the session, state senators pre-filed 271 bills for consideration this year. Legislators may file up to 5 additional measures that deal with specific revenue, tax and budget issues after the start of the session. The 2015 Regular Session must end by June 11, 2015.**

**Citizens can follow the work of the 2015 Regular Session on the Internet at [www.senate.la.gov](http://www.senate.la.gov) or [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov) where they can read and print bills, review committee schedules and agendas and watch legislative proceedings live or through the legislature's video archives. Live broadcasts of legislative proceedings can also be seen weekday afternoons on certain local cable stations participating in LaTV, a cooperative effort of the House, the Senate, Louisiana Public Broadcasting and the Louisiana Cable Television Association.**

**For citizens visiting the State Capitol, there is free wireless Internet Service available. Also, the joint legislative website - [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov) - allows citizens to track legislation of interest as issues move through the legislative process.**

**CITIZEN INFORMATION SERVICES**

**Louisiana Senate Information on the Internet  
[www.senate.la.gov](http://www.senate.la.gov) or [www.legis.la.gov](http://www.legis.la.gov)**

**LaTV Broadcasts of Legislative Proceedings  
Mon.-Fri. 2:00 PM-6:00 PM (In most areas)**

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